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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - EUROPE: AFTERMATH OF THE EU

REFERENDUM - LEBANON AND SYRIA - DARFUR

PARIS - MONDAY, JUNE 06, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

EUROPE: AFTERMATH OF THE EU REFERENDUM  
LEBANON AND SYRIA  
DARFUR

(B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

TODAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT BY BRITISH FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER JACK STRAW TO POSTPONE A REFERENDUM IN THE UK ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL TREATY IS WIDELY REPORTED. WEEKLY NEWSPAPER LE JOURNAL DU DIMANCHE REPORTS: "PARIS, BERLIN AND LUXEMBURG WOULD HAVE PREFERRED THAT TONY BLAIR'S GOVERNMENT WAIT UNTIL THE EU SUMMIT IN BRUSSELS ON JUNE 16 AND 17 TO MAKE THIS DECISION." POPULAR RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE PARISIEN, FOR ITS PART, NOTES: "TONY BLAIR COULD NOT HAVE DECIDED OTHERWISE, BEING AS HE IS, AT THE HEAD OF THE MOST EURO-SKEPTIC COUNTRY AMONG THE TWENTY-FIVE. NOW THAT HE WILL TAKE ON THE PRESIDENCY OF THE EU IT WILL BE UP TO HIM TO OFFICIALLY PRONOUNCE THE DEATH OF THE CONSTITUTION." CATHOLIC LA CROIX, HOWEVER, REPORTS THAT: "THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN B APPEARS TO BE INCREASINGLY LIKELY WITH A POSSIBLE RE-WORKING OF THE TEXT OF THE CONSTITUTION AND A NEW VOTE IN FRANCE AND IN THE NETHERLANDS." (SEE PART C)

DAILIES MENTION THE "FAADE OF HUGS AND SMILES FOR THE CAMERA" BETWEEN JACQUES CHIRAC AND GERHARD SCHROEDER THAT DO NOT ALTER THE "DISARRAY THAT HAS TAKEN HOLD OF THE FRANCO-GERMAN COUPLE." (LIBERATION)

WITH ONLY TWO WEEKS LEFT UNTIL THE ELECTION IN IRAN, FRENCH DAILIES REPORT THE CONCERN OVER "GROWING ABSTENTION." LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION NOTES THAT THE "ISLAMIC REPUBLIC CANNOT AFFORD TO SEE ITS LEGITIMACY CALLED INTO QUESTION BECAUSE OF A LOW VOTER TURNOUT PRECISELY AT A TIME WHEN IT IS UNDERGOING CONSIDERABLE INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE BECAUSE OF ITS NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES."

MOST DAILIES REPORT ON THE SECOND ROUND OF THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS IN LEBANON LAMENTING THE VICTORY OF AMAL-HEZBOLLAH THAT LA CROIX CALLS AN ALLIANCE "AGAINST NATURE". THE FUNERAL OF FRANCO-LEBANESE JOURNALIST SAMIR KASSIR ELICITS SOME REPORTS AND COMMENTARIES, COMMUNIST L'HUMANITE SAYS THE FUNERAL WAS MARKED BY "ANGER AND TEARS." THE SYRIAN PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED REFORMS, WHICH HE INTENDS TO ANNOUNCE AT THE TENTH BAATH PARTY CONGRESS IN DAMASCUS TODAY, IS SEEN BY LE JOURNAL DU DIMANCHE'S EDITORIALIST AS A SERIES OF "BOGUS REFORMS INTENDED TO. MASK A SYSTEM OF TERROR THAT HAS BEEN IN PLACE FOR THE LAST FORTY-TWO YEARS." (SEE PART C)

CATHOLIC LA CROIX DEVOTES ITS FRONT-PAGE AND FIVE-PAGE MAIN STORY TO DARFUR OUTLINING THE CONSEQUENCES OF TWO YEARS OF CIVIL WAR FOR MILLIONS OF SUDANESE. (SEE PART C)

POPULAR DAILY FRANCE SOIR EXPLAINS THE REASONS FOR THE STRONG ANTI-FRENCH SENTIMENT IN COTE D'IVOIRE AND PRESIDENT LAURENT DGAGBO GIVES A TWO-PAGE INTERVIEW IN WHICH HE STATES "CHIRAC LET ME DOWN."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

EUROPE: AFTERMATH OF THE EU REFERENDUM

"TWO TURBULENT WEEKS FOR EUROPE"  
ON PRIVATE RTL RADIO, ISABELLE DATH NOTED (06/06): "THE HOUSE IS ON FIRE. EVEN IF THE SMOKE CLEARED A LITTLE YESTERDAY WITH THE SWISS "YES," IT WAS NOT ENOUGH TO STOP THE SPREAD OF EURO-SKEPTICISM. ESPECIALLY SINCE TODAY GREAT BRITAIN INTENDS TO GIVE THE COUP DE GRACE TO THE TREATY. JACK STRAW WILL CAREFULLY WEIGH EACH WORD IN ORDER NOT TO APPEAR LIKE THE CONSTITUTIONS' GRAVEDIGGER, BUT THE RESULT IS THE SAME."

"BLAIR AT THE HEART OF EUROPE"  
PIERRE ROUSSELIN IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (06/06):  
"EVERYONE KNOWS THAT THE "NO" VOTES IN FRANCE AND IN THE NETHERLANDS HAVE CHANGED THE OUTLOOK. NOW, THE REMAINDER OF

THE COUNTRIES THAT WILL BE VOTING WILL HAVE TO CHOOSE TO SUPPORT OR REJECT A TEXT THAT IS ALREADY DOOMED AND THE PROponents OF THE `YES' VOTE ARE IN THE SURREALIST POSITION OF HAVING TO DEFEND A LOST CAUSE. BETWEEN THEORY AND REALITY A CLEAR CHOICE WILL HAVE TO BE MADE AND TONY BLAIR IS THE MAN FOR THIS TASK. FOR HIM THE CRISIS IN EUROPE HAS A REAL ADVANTAGE, IT ENABLES HIM TO AVOID CERTAIN DEFEAT IN THE REFERENDUM THAT HE HAD PLANNED FOR 2006. NOW, IN ORDER TO PROVE THAT THE UNION CAN STILL FUNCTION, AN AGREEMENT ON THE 2007-2013 BUDGET NEEDS TO BE FOUND. ON THIS POINT TONY BLAIR IS ON THE DEFENSIVE. HE HOLDS THE KEY THAT COULD START UP EUROPEAN MACHINE ONCE AGAIN BECAUSE FRANCE AND GERMANY ARE MUCH TOO WEAK TO SERVE AS THE MOTOR FOR EUROPE TODAY."

LEBANON AND SYRIA  
GILLES DELAFON IN SUNDAY NEWSPAPER LE JOURNAL DU DIMANCHE (06/05): "YESTERDAY IN BEIRUT, THE COURAGEOUS SAMIR KASSIR WAS BURIED. HE WAS THE VICTIM OF MURDER. OBVIOUSLY ORCHESTRATED BY THE SYRIAN REGIME. WASHINGTON HAS MEASURED THE SCOPE OF THE THREAT POSED BY DAMASCUS, WHICH IN RESPONSE TO INTERNATIONAL DISAPPROVAL, TEST FIRED SCUD MISSILES MADE IN NORTH KOREA. THE REGIME IS DAMASCUS IS DETERMINED NOT TO YIELD. AND THE UNITED STATES SEEMS TO SERIOUSLY CONSIDER DOING AWAY WITH THIS REGIME. PARIS AND WASHINGTON [ARE WORKING TOGETHER] ON THIS ISSUE AND GEORGE W. BUSH SURPRISED THE FRENCH BY INVITING MICHEL BARNIER TO WASHINGTON IN ORDER TO HEAR HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION IN LEBANON. THE PENTAGON DOES NOT HIDE THE FACT THAT IT WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE END OF THIS REGIME THAT FINANCES THE SUNNI GUERRILLAS IN IRAQ. AND AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT, THE THOUGHT IS THAT THE CURRENT ANARCHY IN BAGHDAD COULD BE THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO PROVOKE A SURPRISE REGIME CHANGE IN DAMASCUS. FOR THE FRENCH IT IS THE SYRIAN INTERFERENCE IN LEBANON THAT IS A SUBJECT OF CONCERN. PARIS AND WASHINGTON WILL HAVE TO ONCE AGAIN WAVE THE THREAT OF SANCTIONS AGAINST DAMASCUS IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE KILLERS OF THIS HAVEN OF TERROR FROM CONTINUING TO ACT WITH COMPLETE IMPUNITY."

"DAMASCUS ACCUSED"  
THE SUNDAY-MONDAY EDITION OF LEFT-OF-CENTER LE MONDE CARRIES AN UNSIGNED EDITORIAL (06/05-06): "DESPITE DAMASCUS' DENIALS, EVERYTHING POINTS TO SYRIA'S IMPLICATION IN THE MURDER OF SAMIR KASSIR. THE MOTIVE IS CLEAR: TO INTIMIDATE BY STRIKING CIVIL SOCIETY. THE JOURNALIST WAS AN EASY TARGET, BUT THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS THAT ARE TAKING PLACE UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYES OF HUNDREDS OF FOREIGN OBSERVERS SHOULD HAVE PROVIDED HIM WITH A CERTAIN DEGREE OF PROTECTION. JUST AS THE PRESENCE OF UN OBSERVERS IN LEBANON TO FIND OUT THE `TRUTH' BEHIND RAFIK HARIRI'S ASSASSINATION SHOULD HAVE BEEN A DETERRENT. INSTEAD, THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE MURDERS STRUCK WHEN THEY WERE THOUGHT TO BE WEAKENED, AND THEY DID SO WITH AN EASE THAT ACCOMPANIES A FEELING OF TOTAL IMPUNITY."

DARFUR

"THE ICC: PART I"

RADIO COMMENTATOR ON STATE-RUN FRANCE INTER BERNARD GUETTA NOTED THIS MORNING: "DESPITE THE SCOPE OF THE HUMANITARIAN AID TO THE REGION, DESPITE PRESSURE ON THE PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ON THE GOVERNMENT OF KHARTOUM, DESPITE THE CEASE-FIRE THAT WAS SIGNED TWO MONTHS AGO, THE NUMBER OF VICTIMS OF ILLNESS AND MALNUTRITION CONTINUE TO RISE. THIS IS WHY THE SECURITY COUNCIL HAS TURNED TO THE ICC. AND TO UNDERSCORE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SITUATION, THE U.S. HAS AGREED TO THIS RESOLUTION EVEN WHILE CONTINUING TO OPPOSE THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THIS COURT." WOLFF